

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 110649

63

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 110649

TOSEC 1033

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CGEN, UR, US

SUBJECT: ASYLUM REQUEST BY SOVIET SEAMAN

REF: STATE 108943

1. INS INTERVIEWED SOVIET SEAMAN IVAN KHONENKO IN PITTSBURG AND WASHINGTON MAY 24 AND HAS GRANTED HIS REQUEST TO REMAIN IN US.

2. SOVIET EMBASSY REQUESTED CONSULAR ACCESS TO KHONENKO TO DETERMINE WHETHER HIS DECISION MADE VOLUNTARILY. WITH KHONENKO'S CONSENT, INTERVIEW ARRANGED AT DEPARTMENT ON MAY 24. KHONENKO WAS ACCOMPANIED TO WASHINGTON BY INS OFFICER. DURING INTERVIEW WITH SOVIET CONSULAR OFFICER, KHONENKO AFFIRMED THAT HIS DECISION WAS ENTIRELY VOLUNTARY.

3. FOLLOWING CONSULAR INTERVIEW, DEPARTMENT OFFICER IS
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PAGE 02 STATE 110649

ESCORTINGKHONENKO TO NEW YORK WHERE VOLUNTARY AGENCY HAS

AGREED TO TAKE CHARGE OF HIS RESETTLEMENT.

4. DEPARTMENT HAS RECEIVED INQUIRIES FROM PRESS SINCE STORY BROKE IN ERIE, PA. PRESS OFFICE IS SUPPLYING FOLLOWING INFORMATION ON "IF ASKED" BASIS:

--KHONENKO'S NAME AND AGE, AND FACT THAT HE HAS REQUESTED PERMISSION TO REMAIN IN US.

--INS DECISION TO PERMIT HIM TO REMAIN IN US.

--FACT THAT SOVIET CONSUL REQUESTED INTERVIEW AND THAT INTERVIEW WAS ARRANGED; AND

--FACT THAT KHONENKO CONFIRMED TO SOVIET CONSUL HIS DESIRE TO REMAIN IN US.

5. DEPARTMENT WILL NOT RPT NOT PROVIDE INFORMATION ON KHONENKO'S WHEREABOUTS OR FURTHER DETAILS ON CASE IN ATTEMPT TO MINIMIZE PUBLICITY. PRESS INTEREST IS KEEN, HOWEVER, AND STORY MAY BE GIVEN CONSIDERABLE PLAY. RUSH

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